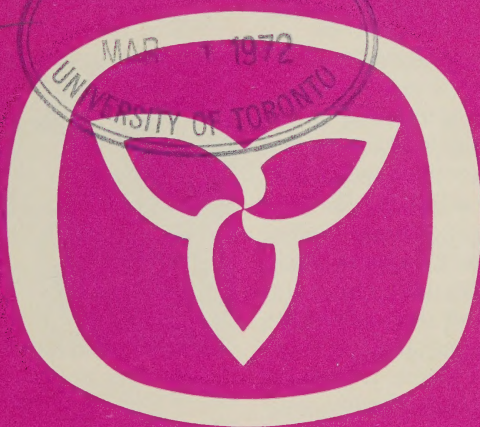


*Ontario Social and Family Services Dept.*  
**Social and Family Services**  
Government Publications

**5**

**Day care  
for your  
child**

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**Honourable  
Thomas L. Wells**



Ontario children and their needs receive particular attention from the Ontario Government. Ensuring that good day care is provided for children is one way.

The importance of day care today cannot be underestimated. Good day care can help a child develop physically, mentally and emotionally. Good day care can provide a valuable service to parents as well, playing a special role for single-parent families and for families where there are many small children, and where the family income does not permit extra services and opportunities for enrichment. Specialized day care can provide handicapped children, such as the mentally retarded, with activities to meet their special needs.

Not every family needs day care. But for those who do, my Department endeavours to provide the best day care possible. This booklet is intended to outline day care possibilities available in Ontario. I hope you will find this information helpful.

*Thomas L. Wells.*



## What kinds of day care are there?

There are several possibilities:

A licensed day nursery is a supervised centre set up for the care of six or more children during the day. Day nurseries provide a regular program of activities and recreation, under the guidance of people specially trained in the care of young children.

A day nursery may be called a "day care centre" or a "nursery school", depending on how long children stay during the day. The day care centre gives day-long care on a year round basis. A nursery school normally offers a half-day program, in the morning or afternoon.

In Ontario, the Day Nurseries Branch of the

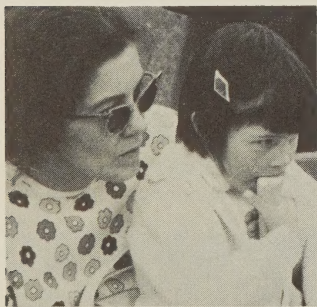
A private day care home is the house or apartment of someone, usually a mother with her own children, who gives care during the day to five or fewer children. Unlike day nurseries, private day care homes are not licensed in Ontario. It is up to the parent to carefully select the home to be sure it is suitable, or to work through a family day care agency which supervises a selected group of private day care homes.

Family day care is a supervised system of private home care, provided by individuals in their own homes. Each home is approved and supervised by an agency or by the municipality, ensuring that proper standards of child guidance and care, health, safety and nutrition are maintained.

## What good day care provides

Good day care is more than simple babysitting.

Good day care offers your child the basic requirements of protection, food, warmth, security and human contact, and also through a well-planned program, encourages development of your child's personality and



Department of Social and Family Services supervises and licenses all day nurseries, unless operated by a public or separate school board, or registered as a private school under The Department of Education Act.

mental well-being. Indoor and outdoor activities are designed to stimulate your child's interests, keep him physically active, alert and happy. The company of other children and adults will develop his social personality and interests, preparing him for school and the social relationships he will encounter in his life.

### **Good day care can benefit children and their parents**

With good day care available, a working mother can be confident that her children are safe and happy and well taken care of while she is at her job. Good day care especially helps the single parent.

Children from underprivileged or crowded homes can find a new broader outlook on life, and relieve the mother of some of the tensions she must face in keeping her children interested and stimulated at home. With subsidized day care at fees geared to income, parents receiving public assistance can be helped to become self-supporting.

A mother in poor health can take advantage of day

care, where her child can find an outlet for his energy, and where he will receive the care and attention which his mother may temporarily be unable to provide.

There are a number of day nurseries in Ontario which take care of children with special mental or physical handicaps.

### **What ages can be given care?**

Any child under the age of ten years may attend a nursery school or day care centre. A few day nurseries provide care for babies and toddlers under two years of age, but the two to five year old range is the most usual. Five year olds attending elementary school kindergarten for a half-day may spend the rest of the day in a day nursery while mothers are at work. School age children of six to ten years can also receive day care in a day nursery beyond normal school hours, until mother returns from work.



There are no age limits placed on the children given care in a private day care home or family day care home. However, by law, no more than five children may be given care in a private or family day care home.

### **What kind of day care is best for your child?**

A uniformly high standard of care is provided by licensed day care centres and nursery schools. Supervisors and members of the staff of day nurseries have special knowledge and experience in the methods of child guidance suited to the ages of the children in the nursery. Since young children require much supervision the Ontario Day Nurseries Act requires one adult to every eight to ten children in a day nursery.

Building, safety and fire standards of day nurseries are set by the Ontario government.

Day nurseries are equipped with a play-ground, child sized tables and chairs, toys and other equipment chosen for their usefulness for children. Each day's program of activities is planned to include periods of indoor and outdoor activities, a nap, a hot noon meal, reading and play in groups and alone.

If there is no licensed day nursery in your area which provides the type of services your child requires, private day care or family day care is an alternative. Private or family day care can be particularly helpful for families with infants, where there is no nursery caring for young babies in their area. A private day care



home can be more convenient to a person's home, saving the child a long time spent travelling to a day nursery. For low-income families, it may be to their advantage to seek lower-cost family or private day care, if there is no nursery nearby providing day care at fees geared to income.

While private day care homes are not licensed, some community agencies offer supervised family day care. If a private day care arrangement is used it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that good day care is provided for her child in a private



placement. To help parents in their choice of a good private day care home, the Ontario Department of Social and Family Services has prepared a booklet called, "Choosing a Good Day Care Home For Your Child".

### **Where to find good day care**

Day care centres and nursery schools are operated by municipalities and Indian bands, private organizations, groups of parents, charitable groups, churches and religious groups. Day nurseries can be found in buildings constructed for that purpose, apartment developments, low rental housing developments, in church halls, community centres, and on university campuses.

To find a day nursery in your area, check with your local municipal social service office, a community information centre, or local social planning council. For day nurseries with fees geared to parents' income, check with your municipality.

A family day care program may be operated by your municipality or by a private agency in your

area. Check with your municipal social service office, or local community information centre. Your municipality may also have made arrangements to provide fees geared to income family day care.

For private day care homes, check with your local public health department, newspaper advertisements, the yellow pages of the phone book, and notices in local stores. Inquire from friends or neighbours who have used a private day care home for their own children.

### **We are here to help**

Under the Day Nurseries



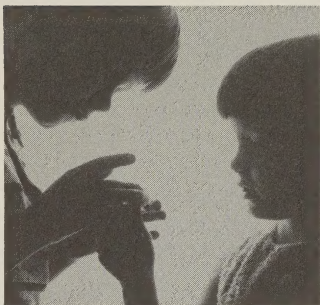
Act, the Ontario Department of Social and Family Services supervises and licenses all day nurseries in Ontario to be sure they offer good day care for children. We make sure that fire and health and safety regulations are met.

Nursery supervisors must meet certain educational qualifications.

We are concerned about the health of your child. All children entering a day nursery must be immunized according to the regulations set out by your local medical officer of health. Staff must also be immunized and have an annual chest x-ray. As far as nutrition is concerned, hot noon meals are provided and we make sure that children under two years of age are fed according to the written instructions of the parent or guardian.

We help municipalities build day nurseries. An 80 per cent subsidy is paid to municipalities which renovate existing buildings to make them suitable as day nurseries. The Department also shares with the municipality 50 per cent of the costs of buying or building new day nurseries.

We help maintain municipally-run day nurseries and family day care programs with an 80 per cent subsidy of certain operating and maintenance costs: This arrangement enables many municipal day nurseries and family day care programs to provide day



care at fees geared to the parents' incomes.

### **The need for more day care**

Many communities need more day care. The Department of Social and Family Services is willing to assist in every way in helping with the details of planning and organizing a day nursery or family day care program.

Field staff with the Day Nurseries Branch can provide practical suggestions and help. For more information on starting a day nursery or family day care program, on licensing procedures, and the provincial help available, contact: The Day Nurseries Branch, Ontario Department of Social and Family Services, Queen's Park, Toronto. 365-5095



The Honourable Thomas L. Wells,  
*Minister*

M. Borczak,  
*Deputy Minister*